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RUCNFB/FBI WASHDC PRIORITY
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RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KARACHI 000073

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: BALOCHISTAN HEATS UP

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Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY CONSUL GENERAL STEPHEN FAKAN FOR REASONS 1
.4 b and d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. At a February 9, telephonic press conference in Quetta, fugitive Baloch nationalist leader Brahamdagh Bugti threatened to retaliate against the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) government for its failure to end GOP military operations in Balochistan. This move comes after three militant Baloch nationalist groups called off a ceasefire pact in January. Many Baloch nationalists, including Bugti, have professed ignorance about the origins of the Balochistan Liberation United Front (BLUF) that claims to have kidnapped U.N. official John Solecki. The nationalists' continue to accuse the GOP of committing atrocities (unverified by Post) partially as a means to inflame tribal sentiment. End Summary.

Militant Baloch Nationalist Leader Threatens PPP

[1](#)2. (C) Fugitive Baloch nationalist leader Brahamdagh Bugti railed against the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) during a February 9 telephonic press conference at the Quetta Press Club. Ayub Tareem, A BBC journalist who attended the meeting, told Post that Bugti criticized the GOP for not ending military operations in Balochistan. Rejecting all GOP offers of reconciliation, Bugti promised that his organization, the Baloch Republican Party (BRP), would retaliate against the GOP for its actions in Balochistan. (Note: Brahamdagh Bugti, 27, gained control of a wing of the nationalist Jamhoori Watan Party after GOP forces allegedly killed the party's leader, his grandfather, Nawab Akbar Bugti in 2006. He later renamed his wing of the party the Baloch Republican Party (BRP). The Baloch Republican Army (BRA) is rumored to be the military wing of the BRP under control of Brahamdagh Bugti from his refuge in Kabul. End note.)

Ceasefire Doesn't Hold

13. (C) A September, 2008 ceasefire, unilaterally called by three armed Baloch nationalist groups) the BRA, the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF)) in response to GOP peace overtures (ref H), was publicly withdrawn by these groups in January, because they claimed the GOP had not met their demands) an end to military operations, the release of political prisoners, accountability for alleged missing persons, and autonomy for the province. Since then, the province has seen an upsurge in violence, despite outreach efforts to the GOP by Nawab Akbar Bugti's son, Nawab Talal Bugti, leader of another wing of the Jamhoori Watan Party.

Rocket Attack in Quetta

14. (C) On February 7, at least four rockets hit a market area in central Quetta, killing one army officer and wounding three other bystanders. In claiming responsibility, the BLA alleged that it had actually fired nine rockets. The attacks came the day after BRP General Secretary Bashir Azeem disappeared in Quetta along with another party member, Chaker Qambarani. Without presenting corroborating evidence, BRP leaders have publicly accused GOP intelligence agencies of abducting the two men and led strikes and protests in the aftermath.

Increasing Violence

15. (C) According to news reports on Balochistan, gas

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pipelines and electrical transformers are routinely bombed, purportedly by nationalists. In one February 4 incident, six employees of an oil exploration company were reported kidnapped after they went missing near the town of Mach, around 70 kilometers southeast of Quetta. A BLA spokesperson, Bevragh Baloch, claimed his organization was responsible. The employees have yet to reappear. In another, BRA members publicly claimed responsibility for the killing of four Punjabi laborers in Noshki, about 140 kilometers south west of Quetta. (Comment: The Baloch have long harbored distrust for ethnic Punjabis, who they see as dominating the country at their expense. Post has not been able to independently verify the Baloch claims. End comment.)

Accusations of GOP Atrocities

16. (C) Many Baloch nationalists Post has spoken with claim tales of GOP atrocities (ref B). In one uncorroborated case, Shazada Zulfiqar, President of the Quetta Press Club, alleged that nine members of a Dera Bugti wedding party, including the bride and groom, were killed by paramilitary forces on February 4. On February 9, Jamil Bugti, a prominent nationalist and the uncle of Brahamdagh Bugti, told the CG that soldiers retaliated for the killing of two of their own by shooting two boys and then burning them in front of their family in Dera Bugti. He did not offer any further evidence. (Comment: As with all such accusations, Post has not been able to confirm these reports and the accusers did not offer any evidence. End comment.)

Kidnapping and the BLUF

17. (C) Baloch Republican Party (BRP) leader Brahamdagh Bugti has publicly disavowed any involvement by his party in the February 2 kidnapping of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Quetta Office Director John Solecki (ref D) or any knowledge of the Balochistan Liberation United Front (BLUF) that has claimed responsibility. Likewise, his uncle, Jamil Bugti, claimed that he had no knowledge of the kidnapping or the BLUF, instead blaming GOP intelligence services. (Comment: Baloch political leaders routinely accuse GOP

officials of conspiring against them without giving proof.
End comment.)

Comment

¶8. (C) International organizations estimate the conflict in Balochistan has resulted in thousands of IDPs, but are reluctant to give an exact count. Many Baloch nationalists frequently complain to Post that USG funding has allowed the Pakistani military to buy weapons that are ultimately used against the Baloch. Nationalists express similar sentiment about prior U.S. support for the Musharraf regime.

¶9. (C) Most of the nationalist leaders that Post has spoken with have taken pains to emphasize their common interests with the USG, such as opposition to the Taliban and other violent religious extremists, while downplaying differences such as their tacit approval of armed militant nationalist groups. Post believes much of this discourse, possibly coordinated among the groups, may be tailored to gain USG support in their fight against the GOP. Many Baloch, in Pakistan's conspiracy-driven society, routinely accuse GOP intelligence services of actively supporting the Islamic militants as a counterbalance to nationalist organizations, without offering any evidence.

¶10. (C) Stories of GOP atrocities) founded or not) serve as propaganda designed to further inflame tribal anger. The often fractious Baloch tribes (some carry on blood feuds against the descendants of enemies for as long as 50 years) share a common desire for, if not an independent state, greater autonomy. Many believe the armed militants are a warranted response to what they view as illegal GOP exploitation of their substantial mineral resources.
FAKAN